

Internal Use Only

77-3339

20 OCT 1978

MEMORANDUM FOR: Director of Personnel

FROM : James H. Taylor, Chairman  
Executive Career Service Board

SUBJECT : Comments on Viability of an Agency-Wide  
Vacancy Notice System

REFERENCE : Memorandum For: Multiple Addressees:

From: DDCI; Subject: Follow-up

29-30 September 1978 Item II A 10

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1. I have reviewed the comments and proposals of the Director of Personnel on broadening the application of the "Vacancy Notice System." I am sensitive to his reservations concerning the long-term utility of such an action within the historical decentralized approach to Agency personnel management and personnel management policy.

2. At the same time I am aware of the frustrations experienced by many -- particularly junior and mid-level employees who feel they have -- and in fact may have -- qualifications to more challenging assignments across organizational and career service lines. I am also quite conscious of the feelings of "proprietaryship" that employees within an organization or career service -- especially its sub-groups have toward promotion opportunities opening up within their own units. They expect some advantage to accrue to those within the unit versus an applicant from without. It is the old idea of the Deputy expecting to be the Chief when the Chief leaves.

3. Nevertheless it seems to me that significant advantages can be gained by an honest effort to consider -- and on occasion employ -- candidates from outside the bureaucratic boundaries of an organization or a career service grouping (which are frequently one and the same). Chances are that employees would


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be more satisfied, in balance, with some system which permits consideration for other assignments -- even though not selected, than with a system which forecloses consideration at the outset.

4. I suppose a textbook could be written on the psychological, administrative and managerial pros and cons of an Agency-wide mandatory competitive job-filling system supported by an Agency-wide vacancy notice system. Such problems as promotion planning, executive development, upward mobility, etc., on the surface at least seem to mitigate against a total competitive job-filling vacancy announcement procedure but are we certain that the result would be either productive or counter-productive? I have the feeling we are doing much conjectural guessing.

5. For the sake of brevity let us assume that no mandatory vacancy notice system exists anywhere in the Agency -- although it does in the E Career Service. In view of all the unknowns concerning the effect of a mandatory system on workload, employee morale, and organizational effectiveness we could consider moving in stages toward an all encompassing vacancy notice system. For one year a mandatory vacancy notice system at each Career Service (Directorate) could be implemented for Headquarters positions only. Depending upon an assessment of the results and value of the system after one year a decision to implement an Agency-wide Headquarters system could be made. If the advantages of such a system overrode the costs then the issues of advertising overseas and field positions could be addressed.

6. I would certainly see no reason why rotational positions and "outside recruitment" requirements could not be opened immediately to Agency-wide vacancy announcements. I would think that if supergrades are truly the "general officers" of the Agency we could open these up to Agency-wide competition. In the meantime we should experiment with a mandatory Directorate vacancy announcement system and see how it works!

  
James H. Taylor

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